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FM AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3722
INFO RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0001
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY 0107

C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000474

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2019
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [PREL](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA WILL MAKE AN ICJ STATEMENT IN FAVOR OF
KOSOVO

REF: A. SECSTATE 90199
[1](#)B. VILNIUS 203

Classified By:
CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DAMIAN LEADER, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND
(D).

GOL Sees the Light on Kosovo Support

[1](#)1. (C) After delivering on September 4 ref A demarche to MFA's Head of the EU Enlargement Division (and Kosovo point man) Nerijus Aleksiejunas, we learned that the GOL was shifting its previous position and would most likely present an oral statement in support of Kosovo at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) oral hearings in December. On September 9 Aleksiejunas confirmed the GOL's decision to take part in the oral hearings. He explained that since the GOL has established diplomatic relations with Kosovo, it is only logical for the GOL to support Kosovo independence at the ICJ. We thanked Lithuania for reconsidering and underscored the importance of allies demonstrating to the court that they accept Kosovo as a member of the international community. We also offered to coordinate with the GOL on its approach to the oral presentation if needed.

What Changed?

[1](#)2. (C) During our previous conversation with Aleksiejunas on April 15 (ref B) he said that the GOL would abstain from written and oral statements in support of Kosovo citing the need to "balance" the GOL's political relationship with Serbia where Lithuanians have significant investments. Prior to delivering ref A demarche, we contacted the British Embassy and learned that British Ambassador Simon Butt had already raised the issue with FM Usackas, who tersely referred him to Aleksiejunas. UK Deputy Head of Mission Stephen Conlon met with Aleksiejunas the week of August 28th and was pessimistic about the GOL's tone on the issue. At that time, Aleksiejunas told Conlon that the GOL was "actively considering" the request to present an oral statement.

[1](#)3. (C) During our September 4 conversation, Aleksiejunas indicated that Lithuanian-Serbian economic ties explained in part the GOL's reluctance to make written and oral statements supporting Kosovo. Mentioning that the Serbian Foreign Minister visited Lithuania for the first time since the 1990s on August 4, Alexsiejunas said that Lithuanians still have investments in Serbia, but noted that a Lithuanian fertilizer factory in Serbia would soon close. Alita, the Lithuanian champagne maker still has a stake in Serbian breweries. Aleksiejunas said that he understands Bulgaria is also shifting its position on the ICJ oral hearings and is likely to make a statement supporting Kosovo. He thanked us

for our series of demarche briefings on the ICJ's Kosovo advisory opinion case and said the information has been helpful.

LEADER